



Tumhe yaad karte karte...

Remembering **SHANKER-JAIKISHAN** on the 30th death anniversary of Jaikishan, which fell on September 12...

THIRTY years ago, on September 12, 1971, the hyphen between Shanker and Jaikishan became a symbolic appendage as Jaikishan Panchal died, broken by the split with his partner. But the magic in their melodies never ceased. And S-J and their songs live on because of the hyphen and not the hype that certain other composers are privileged to enjoy.

To fall into the trap of separating the Shanker compositions and contributions from Jaikishan would be to demean this hyphen that was the keynote of their magic. The world knows that, thanks to their origins and backgrounds, they did tend towards a particular angle of their fantastic oeuvre, but they were far from being like an office with two autonomous departments. The hyphen said it all - one was incomplete without the other.

Says a close associate of over 20 years, "It's only broadly true that Shanker handled the classical or in-depth songs, and Jai the light-weight ones. There are exceptions galore. Each one was involved till they split on every song, regardless of who first came up with the basic tune. For this reason, it is also inaccurate to say that Jai worked only with Hasrat, and Shanker with Shailendra. The real divide existed there - Shailendra wrote the meatier songs, Hasrat the romantic ones."

Shanker Singh Ram Singh Raghuvanshi, was born in 1922 in Punjab. His father had settled in Andhra Pradesh, and Shanker trained as a dancer, and even worked with the famous Krishna Kutty. He mastered the *tabla* (which he would play in a local temple there), *pakhawaj* and other instruments, and when he came to Mumbai he joined the troupe of dance-master Sohanlal and Hemavati (the late Sapru's wife) as a *tabla* player.

Jaikishan, born 1929 in Bulsar, Gujarat, was the son of the court-singer of the Raja of Dharampur. Blessed with great looks, Jai came to Mumbai to become a hero, and in his struggling phase even worked as a time-keeper in a central Mumbai factory.

The first meeting between them is said to have taken place in the Santa Cruz office of a famous film director, where both began to chat with each other as they waited. Shanker told Jaikishan that he was playing the *tabla* at Prithvi Theatre, and since Jai had revealed that he played the harmonium as well, he suggested that he too try for a job there. Thus did the RK chapter silently begin, a chapter that was to

Hindi film music as a commercial force on its own. Redefining the parameters of popularity, S-J rose meteorically, scoring a fantastic high with their second film *Nagina*, which preceded *Awara* in 1951. By this time, the other composers around realised that they had to toe the line and match their exacting standards - or lag behind.

Unlike the top tune-smiths of today, Shanker-Jaikishan never took their success for granted (L-P emulated this too) or used their position to usher in unhealthy trends. Shanker - crude, tough, forceful - never broke away from his classical roots. When sceptics scoffed at what they could do when they replaced Naushad on distributor demand as composers of *asant Bahar*, S-J proved the criticism completely off-target as they delivered a score as riveting and certainly more original than *Baiju Bawra*. *Badi der bhayi* (Rafi), *Nain mile chain kahaan* (Lata-Manna Dey), *Ketaki gulaab juhi* (Manna Dey-Bhimsen Joshi), *Duniya na bhaaye mujhe* (Rafi) and *Bhay bhajana* and *Sur na saje* (both Manna Dey) unleashed a classical force that few have equalled since.

For almost two decades, Shanker and Jaikishan moulded public tastes, and struck the perfect balance between populism and classicism. In fact, S-J made it a point to incorporate a classical or semi-classical number in many a formula entertainer, like *Mere sang gaa gungunaa* (Suman/Janwar), *Chham chham baaje re payaliya* (Manna Dey/Jaane Anjaane) and *Kaise samjhaaon* (Suraj).

Experiments and innovations were the name of the S-J game as they blended a *gawwali* - *Jab ishq kahin* (Asha-Mubarak Begum) - with Western packaging in *Arzoo* mischievously (a Jai speciality), 'renovated' Naushad's *Hamin se mohabbat* (*Leader*) as the enduring *Ae phoolon ki rani* in the same film, and made singers try out styles associated with Western rock as in *Aiyaya karoon main kya suku suku* (Rafi/Junglee).

Their carefully-orchestrated (pun intended) PR kept them in focus all the time, and their personal affairs made as much history as their melodies. That brings to mind the buzz that S-J won more awards than anyone else because they made the necessary 'arrangements'.

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Working as musicians on Prithvi's plays, the duo enhanced their skills and learnt the ropes. Ram Ganguly was the in-house music director, and when Raj Kapoor launched his first film *Aag*, Shanker and Jaikishan had become assistants. Their unofficial contribution to the score of *Aag* was so high that Raj Kapoor's close relative, Vishwa Mehra, who had been keenly observing things, spilled the beans to Raj. The actor-filmmaker promptly dropped all ideas of repeating Ram Ganguly in his new film *Barsaat*, and a new era began.

The leaders, never the followers

■ To say that Shanker-Jaikishan led, and others followed would be no exaggeration. In every aspect of film music, they were the pioneers and the trendsetters.

Orchestration - Form and sound

■ S-J introduced cerebral orchestration to film music, eliminating the monotonous *thekas* that ruled till then. It was they who gave Lata Mangeshkar an identity, and it was they as assistants to Ram Ganguly in *Aag*, and later as composers of *Barsaat*, who influenced Mukesh's self-discovery as a singer with his own stamp, and not as the Saigal clone he was all the way till *Andaz*.

With *Ab mera kaun sahara* (Lata) and *Main zindagi mein har dum rota hi-rahahoon* (Rafi), S-J showed the world that the sad song could be rhythmic too. The music-makers of today, caught in the rhythm-n-beats trap, are not doing anything exactly revolutionary when they compose the sad *Tanhayee* (in the recent *Dil Chahta Hai*) to fast beats!

In a world gone mad with hype, S-J have been of late sidelined in the R.D. wave. Says a music analyst, "Much is being made of R.D. Burman bringing in the Western touch to film music. Shanker and Jaikishan did this more than a decade before him. They may not have introduced Western music to Hindi films, but it was they who pioneered so many of the compositional and vocal styles, and orchestral innovations from the West that others, including Pancham, subsequently followed. S-J were always the leaders."

Though Shanker was the more learned man of the two, it was Jaikishan who was more instinctive, and thus more variegated. Together they broke all the rules that prevailed at their entry, and replaced them with their own. *Awara* signalled Hindi cinema's first significant dream sequence in the double-song *Tere bina aag yeh chandni* and *Ghar aaya mera pardesi*, a compositional and orchestral revolution at that time. Today, every third song is a 'dream' sequence shot in any corner of the globe!

To sum it up, Shanker-Jaikishan established a distinct form to film music -- as different from folk and classical-based styles, and when R.D. Burman and A.R. Rahman broke their traditions in 1972 and 1993 respectively, it was only to gradually return by compulsion to the wholesome model that S-J have designed, as *1942-A Love Story* and *Lagaan* have proved.

The art of selling

■ The all-fresh sound of *Barsaat* washed away the competition in 1949. *Jiya beqaraar hai*, *Tirchhi nazar hai*, *Barsaat mein tumse mile hum*, *Hawa mein udtaa jaaye* and *O mujhe kisise pyar ho gaya*, all became cult songs in an 11-track, all-hit score. Record sales touched an all-time high, thus spot-lighting for the first time the potential of

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The hype over their split in the mid-60s, the reasons ascribed to it and the spotlight on their lifestyles (especially Jai's flamboyant one with pretty girls hovering around him like butterflies) are a part of music lore.

Shanker-Jaikishan also updated the status of the composer in Bollywood. Reportedly the first composers to charge a lakh for their music way back in the 50s, they charged a hefty Rs 10 lakhs (they had split and they got Rs 5 lakhs each) for Ramanand Sagar's 1965 tear-jerker *Arzoo*. Their hi-profile lifestyles and images had even made Kalyanji-Anandji and Laxmikant-Pyarelal model their sartorial preferences self-confessedly along S-J lines!

And the respect and clout they commanded can never be equalled by today's hot-shots -- despite the controversies and tall hoardings. The magical name Shanker-Jaikishan was enough to sell and assure ISI music standards -- their faces were not needed, though they were sometimes there.

Range and capacity

■ Admittedly S-J were overwhelmingly inclined towards Rafi, Lata, Mukesh and Manna Dey, and maybe Shanker delivered all those hit solos and duets with Sharda (*Suraj*, *Pyar Mohabbat*, *An Evening In Paris*, *Around The World*, *Duniya*, *Diwana*, *Jane Anjaane* et al) only because he was infatuated with her, and wanted to prove a point, but S-J delivered hits even with singers considered commercial no-no's, like Subir Sen (*Kathputhli*, *Marine Drive*) and Mubarak Begum (*Hamrahi*). Bhupinder recently revealed that after giving him a song in *Raat Aur Din*, Jaikishan had promised him an active role in their music. "Had Jai lived, my career would have taken a different course," said the singer.

S-J were the first composers to sign six films or more at a time, something unthinkable in their generation. Once again, they saw to it that their quality did not suffer. Rather, and to the complete amazement and grudging admiration of their competition, the result of their 'mass-production' was the awesome variety. For example, their 1966 releases were *Amrapali*, *Budtameez*, *Love In Tokyo*, *Suraj* and *Teesri Kasam*.

As for their individual roles in music, one historian notes the interesting fact that Shanker and Jaikishan had a secret pact between them -- that Shanker would do the classical compositions, and Jaikishan the background score. Jai's background music skills will always remain a legend in musical circles. His compositions magically fitted the scenes to a second, even without the timer that every other composer needs.

The originals

■ All of them have adapted or lifted tunes, but Shanker-Jaikishan had the minimum percentage, stated Pyarelal once. S-J were past masters at re-working their own, and even their associates' tunes (see the *Leader-Arzoo* example above) if they felt that the full potential of the basic melody had not been realised. Invariably, the new song was quite ahead in calibre and popularity from the source. And even in their copies, a lot of cerebration went in, as in *Dil usse do* (*Andaz*), which they adapted from a Beatles hit. What came across in the final take was a quintessential S-J song.

On the other hand, their songs have remained 'sources' for future songs for several composers. Rajesh Roshan and Anand-Milind re-worked *Kisine apna banaake mujhko* (*Patita*) in *Kishan Kanhaiya* and *Dhanwaan* respectively. L-P's *Kaate nahin kat te* (*Mr India*) takes inspiration from a S-J *mukhda* in *Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja* (1961). Raam-Laxman, Jatin-Lalit, Nadeem-Shravan, Anu Malik and finally A.R. Rahman (*Mugbala* inspired from *Pyar hua ikraar hua*) are those who have delivered some of their hits, based on S-J creations made decades ago.

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